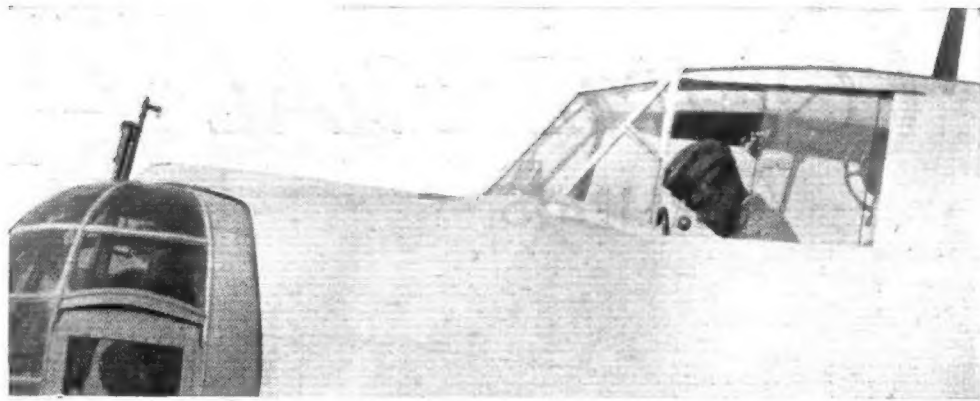


# INSPECTS HIS FORCE

*His Private Aeroplane, Visits  
Wittering and Martlesham*



His Majesty at the controls of the Bristol 130 bomber-transport monoplane at Martlesham.

inspected No. 11 F.T.S. The interest there was more personal than mechanical, and the King inspected the pupils on parade and the staff, many of whom were presented to him, and then went round the sergeants' mess, the airmen's dining hall, and the married quarters. Lunch was taken in the officers' mess.

Mildenhall came third in the itinerary, and there the King inspected the Heyfords of Nos. 99 and 38 (B) Squadrons, and the Hinds of No. 40 (B) Squadron. An Overstrand was also on view.

If these three visits had at all wearied the King, he showed no sign of it when he disembarked from the *Rapide* at Martlesham, nor did his appetite for aeronautical technicalities seem in any way jaded. Fielden put the *Rapide* down on the rather sandy aerodrome promptly at the advertised time of 15.50 hours, and the King, after greeting Air Commodore Verney, Director of Technical Development, and Group Capt. Maund, at once proceeded to show the keenest interest in the long line of new types drawn up before him. It was a very fine selection, too, especially for anyone who had not seen the S.B.A.C. Display. The occasion was marked by the informal christening of the Hawker monoplane with the name of Hurricane 1. Hitherto that machine has been known to all the world but has had no name. Now that lack has been put right, and the new name is a very suitable choice.

## The Line-up

The machines were lined up in the following order: Spitfire, Hurricane, Jockey (this name is unofficial, but is generally used), Blenheim (the pukka mid-wing Blenheim, not the 142), Battle, Wellesley, Westland Army co-operation machine, H.P. medium bomber, Vickers medium bomber, A.W. bomber-transport and Bristol bomber-transport. A very fine lot of aeroplanes, and we don't care who knows it. There were other things, too, which we *do* care who knows about. The King had a good look at them and we will leave it at that.

Now, the Air Force is the King's Air Force. Until lately it has been small and some of its equipment has been antiquated. It is soon to be large, and it is to have the finest aeroplanes in the world. Here were some of them on view, and here came the King to have a good look at them. A man with a most untechnical mind could not have helped being distinctly interested on such an occasion; but the King is no mean pilot himself, and he would not have been human if such a line of machines had not stirred his interest. His enthusiasm was most obvious and unmistakable. For one whole hour he looked at those machines, climbed into cockpits and gunners' seats, asked questions, examined machine guns and bomb trap-doors,

and gave every evidence of thoroughly enjoying himself. The photographers were not allowed near enough for them to get a picture of the King in the gunner's seat in the nose of the Vickers unnamed bomber, which was not completely furnished; but he sat there some time moving the transparent nose about with his hands, quite evidently full of interest. It was a picture which those who saw will not quickly forget. The King was discriminating, too. At one unmentionable device temporarily mounted on a machine for which it is not intended, he glanced casually, watched its workings, and passed on without delay.

Then the Spitfire and the Blenheim were flown. That recalled days at Calshot, when everyone used to try to calculate the speed of the S.6 as Waghorn or Atcherley flashed past. Both machines seemed amazingly fast, and it was hard to realise that their supercharged engines would not let them show their full speed at such low altitudes. Then, heading into the wind, they flew each as near the stalling point as a Martlesham pilot dares to go, and that, too, made a pretty astonishing sight. We hope the King enjoyed his tea after that experience. He had certainly earned it, he had certainly had a very enthralling time, and his visit had put fresh heart into the men who are spending their every endeavour to make the Royal Air Force the finest Service in the world.



The King inspecting personnel at Wittering. (Below) Keen interest in the Supermarine Spitfire, which gave a demonstration.

